(b) whether all of them are entitled to get special pay; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons for discrimination in the same category of officers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) 593 (Five hundred ninety three).

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Only officers performing the duties of higher responsibilities and of specially arduous nature are granted special pay.

Review of Indian Post Office Act, 1898

1867. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration of Government to review Indian Post Office Act, 1898; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Need for changes in the Act has arisen in the context of emerging trends in communication by mail in the country and other socio-economic factors. A Committee was set up by the Government for this purpose and the report of the Committee has been received by the Government.

Time taken by Government to make telephone operational after Installation

1868. SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA:
SHRI N.E. BALARAM:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the time being taken by Government to make the telephone operational after installing the instrument for a new connection;

(b) whether Government are aware that in most of the cases it takes days and weeks together to make the telephone operational;

(c) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to a news item under "Aisa Bhi Hota Hai" published in "Nav Bharat Times" of 1st July, 1993; and

(d) if so, what action has been taken by Government in this connection?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) and (b) Sir, When a large number of connections are released due to an expansion of an exchange, to avoid delay, advance action is taken to fit the Subscribers instruments and keep them tested in anticipation of the commissioning of the exchange. It is possible that in such cases, depending upon the number of lines being released, there is delay between the fitting of the instrument and its energisation. However, the Subscribers are always advised about the likely delay in the commissioning of the exchange.

(c) and (d) No Sir. The New Delhi edition of Nav Bharat Times of 1-7-93 does not contain a news item on telephone service under such a heading.

Large switches to be supplied by Multinational Companies

1869. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Telecommunication department has shortlisted a few multinationals for supplying large switches; and

(b) if so, what are the names of these companies and details of the orders to be placed with each of these five companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) As per bid issued by DOT a few suppliers registered for manufacture of switching equipment in India and who had obtained clearance from the RBI and validated their systems have been considered for supply of more than 5 lakhs lines of switching equipment.

(b) In the above mentioned tender which was open to the Indian registered companies for supply of digital local telephone exchanges few companies, viz., M/s Sei-

mens India Ltd., M/s Ericsson Telecom India Pvt. Ltd., M/s Fujitsu India Telecom Ltd., Alcatel and AT&T have been considered for orders of more than 5 lakhs lines.

Post Offices in Big Cities

1870. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of post offices in big cities are totally inadequate in proporion to the population;

(b) whether Government propose to increase the number of post offices in the big cities;

(c) if so, what are the plans therefor;

(d) whether Government propose to make it mandatory for the township colony development agency to provide suitable place for the post offices;

(e) whether there is any proposal under consideration of Government to acquire suitable locations from the existing completed structure on the grounds of essential services; and

(f) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

As on 31-3-92, there were 16224 urban post offices to serve a population of 217.17 million (1991 census), i.e. on an average, an urban post office serves a population of 13,385 which is a satisfactory ratio.

(b) and (c) During Annual plan 1993-94, it is proposed to open 100 departmental sub post offices in urban areas. The post offices are opened on the basis of need, fulfilment of prescribed norms and availability of resources for the purpose.

(d) and (e) There are no such proposals.

(f) Does not arise in view of reply to (d) & (e) above.

1871. [*Transferred to 19th August, 1993*]

Computerisation of Telephone Exchanges in the country

1872. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government chalked out any comprehensive plan to computerise the telephone exchanges in the country in a big way; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Details are given in the Statement.

Statement

The following actions have been initiated by the Government to computerise the Telephone exchanges as well as some important services in the country:—

— At present 12314 exchanges out of a total of 17368 exchanges are of electronic (computerised) type pertaining to various technologies viz. E. 10B, FETEX 100L, PRX-A, NEAS-61S, C.DOT and ILT.

— There are plans to replace all the electro-mechanical exchanges of various types as and when they out live their life. No new electromechanical exchanges are being introduced after 1995-96.

— More than 5 lakhs lines of new technology electronic exchanges are planned to be introduced in the Telecom network during the current Financial Year.

— Directory Enquiry (197) and Fault Repair Service (198) are being computerised in a big way. These services have been made available at 20 and 150 stations respectively so far.

— Computerisation of large manual trunk exchanges at 14 locations in the country has been planned during the Eighth Plan. Computerisation of 20 medium size Trunk exchanges have been planned during the next two years.